

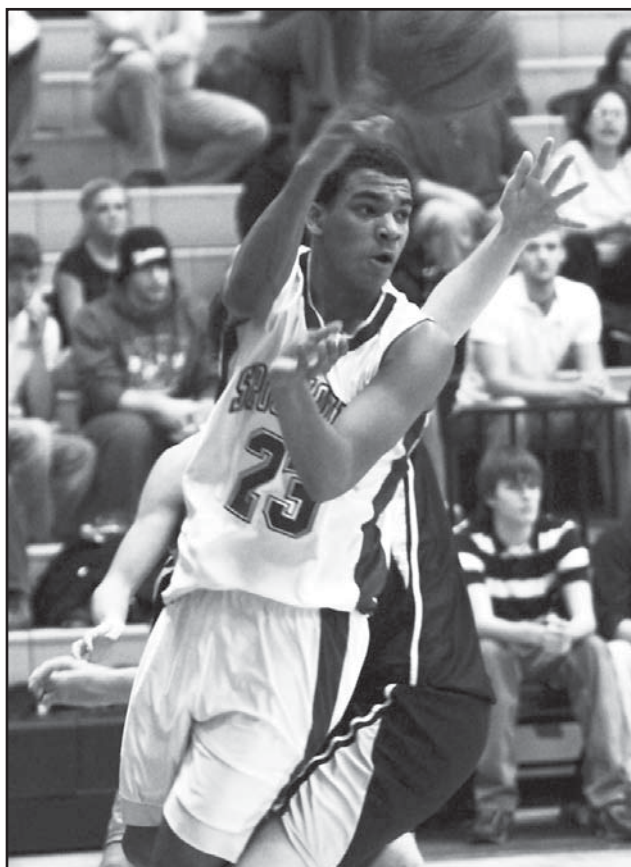
WHO WILL BE THE NEXT

FACE OF THE BEARCATS

WINTER SPORTS PREVIEW NWMISSOURIAN '09

BOYS' BASKETBALL

SENIOR
 KEENAN
 JOINER passes
 the ball off
 to an open
 teammate in a
 66-63 win last
 season against
 Trenton.



file photo

'Hounds optimistic entering new season

By Trey Williams
 Missourian Reporter

Losing players is never a good thing for a team, especially when they are all seniors who add stability and experience.

The Spoofhounds coming off a 15-9 season are optimistic and looking to have a repeat season, despite losing five seniors from last year's squad.

"I am very optimistic," head coach Mike Kuwitzky said. "And the players are goal oriented."

Kuwitzky is excited about the players he has returning.

"I think we have a better shooting team; people who can score," Kuwitzky said.

The 'Hounds have a good outside shooter in point guard

Josh Elliot and a dominant force inside in Adam Thomson, both of whom saw a good amount of playing time last year.

Elliot was the second leading scorer on the team with 247 points last season and Thompson pulled down a total of 103 rebounds.

"Some teams may point at us as someone to contend with," Kuwitzky said.

The 'Hounds find themselves in a pretty tough conference where, as coach Kuwitzky says, anybody could beat anybody.

The teams Kuwitzky said they have to look out for are Smithville, Cameron and Lafayette. The Hounds are pretty sure that with the work they put in during the off-season, they can stick with

any one of these teams.

"We've known since summer the goals that we want to accomplish and all we have to do is finish that," senior Colton Mattson said.

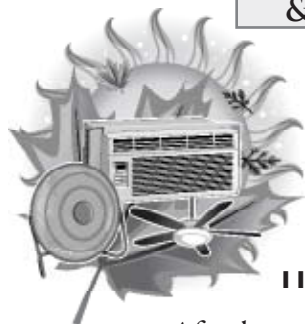
Mattson said that the senior class this year has been playing together since eighth grade.

"I think we just gel a lot more this year," senior Nic Mattson said.

Becoming more of a team and looking out for each other seems to be the main focus of this year. The 'Hounds hope that if they do that then they can accomplish the goals set during the summer; winning conference and districts and moving on from there.

Maryville tips-off their season with the Savannah Tournament on Nov. 30

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GIRLS' BASKETBALL

'Hounds aim for return to playoffs

By Tony Botts
Comm. Sports Editor

The last time the Maryville girls basketball team walked off the court was after a quarterfinals double-overtime loss to Skyline.

Even though the 'Hounds graduated three seniors, they retained many girls who saw significant game time last season. Included in the list of returning letter winners is All-State, All-District and All-Conference point guard Meri-dee Scott.

Along with Scott, the 'Hounds will be seeing playing time from All-District and All-Conference guard Emily Kisker, center Tracy Jensen, point guard Mataya Wooten, forward/guard Taylor Gadbois, guard Molly Steins and point guard Shannon McClellan, who is returning from an ACL injury.

However, head coach Grant Hageman said they are continuing to look for younger players to step up due to a lack of depth; something teams in the past

benefited from."

"No one's really caught my eye yet," Hageman said. "We had several girls this summer who got a lot of time with the varsity and got mixed in. So, that's the biggest question mark we have going into the season.

The team has made it clear that their main goal is to get the 'Hounds back into the playoffs to avenge their loss from last season.

However, before the team can begin to think about playoffs, they must achieve a lofty goal set for the first half of the season.

"The first thing we need to accomplish is to try and be undefeated before Christmas break," Hageman said.


The 'Hounds will face an early season challenge when they travel to Hamilton to face very good team; according to Hageman. This should be a measuring stick for the rest of the season.

The girls' first games this year will take place Nov. 30 through Dec. 5 at the Savannah tournament.



file photo

JUNIOR GUARD MATAYA Wooten hustles for the basket in a game against LeBlond. Wooten was part of the team that won the district title last season.



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NORTHWEST BASKETBALL

NEW FACES ON THE COURT

Nine freshman look to make an impact for ‘Cats

By Brian Bosiljevac
Sports Editor

A new era of Bearcat women’s basketball starts this season.

The ‘Cats welcome ten new faces to the 2009-10 roster. Nine of the 10 are true freshmen.

“You know, because they are so young they are so unpredictable,” head coach Gene Steinmeyer said. “With a team this old my, expectations for this team aren’t much more than just the next game. I just expect them to grow. I just hope they grow as a team and mature as a team and they all kind of grow up together.”

The team has progressed through the off-season and have shown vast improvements from day one, Steinmeyer said.

After losing four seniors from last year’s roster, this year’s team will enter the season with two juniors as the oldest on the team.

“I worry about the talent those seniors had,” Steinmeyer said. “We haven’t had many players better than Meghan Brue and we’ll miss that. We haven’t had many clutch players as Jessie Burton was and we’ll miss that. It’s just a shame people like Amber Vandevender never really got to show what they could really do because she was hurt all the time. But I think we have good team leadership this year and I’m not worried about that. We’ve got a different type of talent from a Meghan Brue or Jessie Burton brought on the team. So now we’ll just have to adjust to that type of talent.”

The ‘Cats will lean on players like sophomores Abby Henry, Tara Roach and Shelly Martin, who saw

a significant amount of playing time last year as freshmen.

“Abby Henry, people won’t even recognize her this year because she’s come so far from her injured knee,” Steinmeyer said. “She’s just that much better from that injured knee. Shelly Martin is just that much more mature. She’s now telling the freshmen what they can expect, instead of just experiencing it themselves.”

Also six-foot, two-inch junior Gentry Dietz will rejoin the ‘Cats after a season-long injury kept her from seeing any action. Dietz transferred to Northwest from Southern Illinois last season.

“I think this is probably her fifth season because of injuries or whatever reason and wasn’t able to play,” Steinmeyer said. “I think she has a lot of experience that she can give the other players.”

Dietz and the addition of six-foot one twin freshmen, Alexis and Candace Boeh, provides Northwest with depth at the post position.

“We had a pretty good post player last year in Rick-eya McElroy and it was her first year in college too,” Steinmeyer said. “She was really up and down and after her we didn’t have anybody. This year with the twins out of Olathe Northwest, Alexis and Candace, we’ve got a group of three post players and we think we could go with any of the three.”

With all of the youthful talent on the ‘Cats roster, Steinmeyer is reminded of 2004 when the Bearcats won the conference title and had a

large recruiting class following the season.

“We had some success as freshmen, a little more as sophomores and then junior and senior year they made the NCAA tournament and won another conference championship themselves,” Steinmeyer said. “Maybe you hope for a little bit quicker success with this bunch, but something similar to that.”

The ‘Cats tip-off at 2 p.m. Sunday at home against Upper Iowa.

“Upper Iowa is about as big of an unknown as we are because they have a bunch of new kids too,” Steinmeyer said. “It’s going to be a type of game where nobody is going to know too much about the other team. They have a really good coach and he gets his kids to play hard and so which ever team plays the hardest is probably going to win the game.”



file photo

SOPHOMORE FORWARD TARA Roach tries to get a pass off against an Emporia State defender. Northwest fell to Emporia in both games last season.



file photo

SOPHOMORE GUARD KYLE Haake attempts to shake a Missouri Southern defender in a 72-70 win last season.



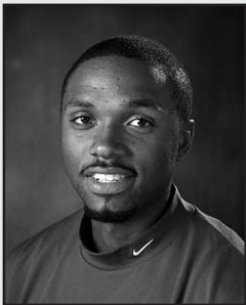
Abby Henry
Sophomore Guard

15.8 minutes per game

3.6 points per game

1.7 rebounds per game

Players to Watch



Elijah Allen
Junior Forward

26.4 minutes per game

13.1 points per game

4.7 rebounds per game

*Based on 08/09 stats

Seven new players look lead the ‘Cats back to the MIAA tournament

By Jason Lawrence
Asst. Sports Editor

New is a common theme among the Northwest men’s basketball team.

There are 7 new players to go along with 7 returning letter winners.

“We’ve got very good kids who are very coachable, so hopefully that leads us to a few wins,” head coach Ben McCollum said.

Of the 14 players on the team, only three are seniors. Two of those seniors, Edriss Floyd and Girod Adams, are players that McCollum expects to step up and lead this season.

Floyd, a transfer from Penn Valley Community College, averaged 7.1 points in 27.6 minutes per game for the Bearcats last season. Adams started 15 games for Stephen F. Austin last season, averaging 5.3 points per contest.

Junior forward Elijah Allen is also expected to be a big factor this season after being the second leading scorer last season, scoring 13.1 points per game.

In addition to all of the new players, former head coach Steve Tappemeyer retired after 21 years of service and a 12-15 record last season, his first year with a win percentage below .630 since 1997.

Northwest won the MIAA tournament title in 2008, before missing out last season.

“I just think it’s about playing harder and handling adversity better than your opponent does,” McCollum said. “I don’t think it’s as much a talent league as it is a mental toughness league and I think we have a pretty mentally tough group, so hopefully good things will happen.”

McCollum, a former ‘Cats’ guard, returns to Northwest to lead the team. He is the 20th head coach in the program’s 95 year history.

During McCollum’s two years

on the team, they compiled a 51-12 record, including a 29-3 record in 2001-02, which culminated in the program’s first Elite Eight appearance.

In 2004, McCollum served as a graduate assistant. During the last four years, he has been an assistant coach at Emporia State University.

“I identified Coach McCollum as a candidate for our position early in our process,” said Northwest Athletics Director Bob Boerigter in a press release last March. “He impressed us at every step in this process and I’m convinced that he is indeed the right person to lead our program. The fact that coach McCollum played here and is one of our many successful alumni was an extra bonus. I’m looking forward to working with him as he continues the fine tradition of Bearcat basketball.”

McCollum has a tough task ahead of him, following Tappemeyer’s successful career, but has high expectations heading into his inaugural season.

“We have very high expectations,” McCollum said. “Obviously with every season you want to make the conference tournament and then hopefully compete for a championship as far as the conference goes, make the national tournament and on up the ladder.”

The Bearcats were selected to finish 10th in the conference in the coaches poll and ninth in the media poll.

“They’ve got us down at 10th in the conference,” Floyd said. “We’re a lot better than that. I think we’re going to shock a lot of people.”

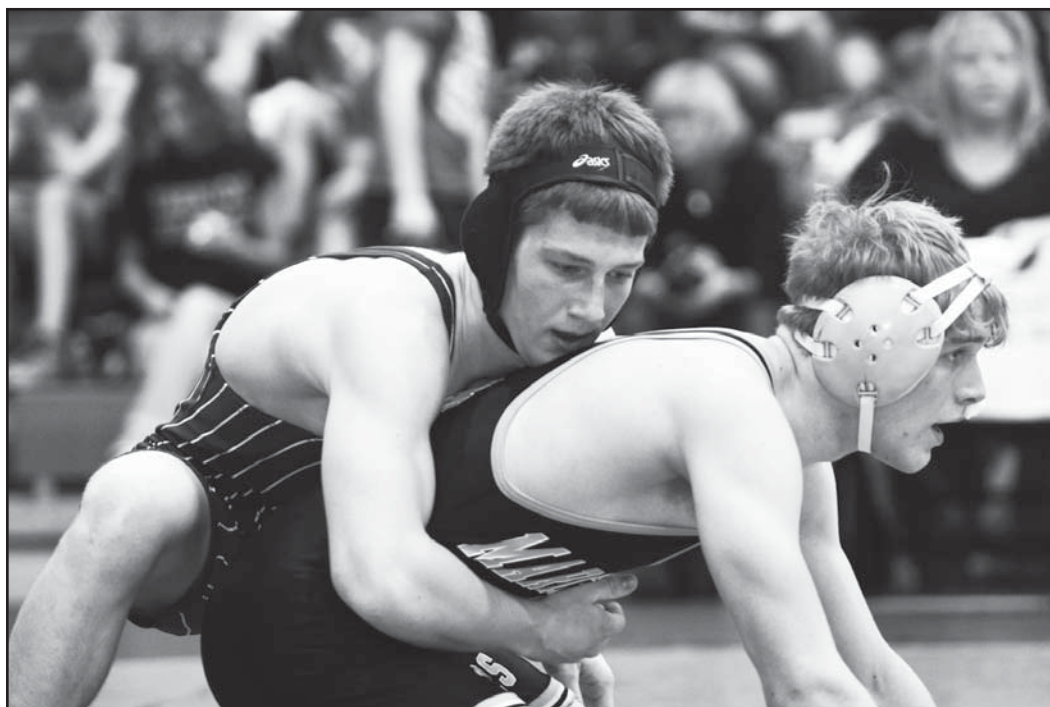
Northwest kicks off its season at 7 p.m. tomorrow as the head to Columbia, Mo. to take on the reigning Big 12 tournament champion Missouri Tigers.

“They’re a fast paced team,” sophomore guard Nick Mickle said. “We’re a fast paced team. It’ll be good to see where we’re at.”

MHS WRESTLING

“It just makes me work harder than I have ever worked before. It’s a lot of added pressure, but with pressure comes hard work. Hopefully that will help me be more dominant this year.”

- Bryce Alexander



file photo

SENIOR BRYCE ALEXANDER wrestles during the district tournament. Alexander is the reigning 152-pound state champion.

Returning state champions work to defend their titles

By Tony Botts
Missourian Reporter

When someone walks into Maryville High School’s wrestling room, a giant green board displays all the names of past state-placers. This year, two of those wrestlers have a chance to add their names one more time.

The ‘Hounds return two state champions, Bryce Alexander at the 152 lbs weight class and Dannen Merrill at 119 lbs. Overall, they return ten letter winners to a room packed with experience.

“We really don’t have a strong area,” head coach Joe Drake said. “We are returning two state champions; one is in the lightweights and one is in the middle weights. We got a couple more state qualifiers; one is a heavyweight and the other is in the middle as well.”

Drake, along with Alexander, said that with so many good wrestlers spread throughout the lineup, it will create balance as well as a highly competitive wrestling room.

Drake pointed out that their only

weakness could be at their 103 lbs weight class, which is open.

For Alexander and Merrill, defending their titles won’t start until mid-December, but their preparation starts well before then.

“It’s a lot of pressure,” Alexander said. “It just makes me work harder than I have ever worked before. It’s a lot of added pressure, but with pressure comes hard work. Hopefully that will help me be more dominant this year.”

With the football team having so much success, the wrestling team will not pick up all of its wrestlers until after the ‘Hounds conclude their season. Due to this, they will not wrestle their first competition until Dec. 12 at the Smithville tournament.

Not everyone is bothered by this however.

“I look at it as a time to get ahead,” Alexander said. “With the football players still playing, I need that time to get myself back into shape, get myself back into the mentality. So, actually I look at it as a cushion and to use it to get back in the zone instead of hopping back in to wrestling.”

Maryville R-II Wrestling Home Meets

1/7 Savannah/Cameron/Lafayette 6 p.m.

1/14 Falls City/Sabetha 5:30 p.m.

1/21 Maysville/ West Platte 6 p.m.

1/23 MEC Tournament 10 a.m.

1/30 Quad State Classic 10 a.m.

The Northwest MISSOURIAN

Keeping you current!

TRACK AND FIELD

Team recruits 30 new athletes

By Jason Lawrence
Asst. Sports Editor

As cross country season winds to a close, track athletes head back inside to start the indoor part of their season.

The team has been preparing since long before school began in September for this upcoming season.

"For the distance runners, it's a mental thing," head coach Scott Lorek said. "They're so used to the year-round thing that it's not so much of a transition from cross country to track. The important thing is that they are going to get somewhat of a break between the seasons, but it's more of a mental break than anything else. As far as everyone else, I think that when we get to meets, they're just antsy to get going and start competing. They're going all fall just training."

Northwest will welcome back three All-Americans when track competition begins on Dec. 11 at Iowa State.

Seniors Emily Churchman (heptathlon) and Ben McKim (throws) as well as sophomore Tyler Shaw (hurdles) will lead the team this season.

Seniors Bridget Kleine (sprints) and Kate Walter (throws), junior Johanna Aviles (hurdles) are athletes Lorek expects to help lead the way for the women's team.

Former state qualifier, senior John Miles, is also expected to have a big impact this year for the men in sprints.

The 'Cats broke 11 school records over the course of the last track season.

"The records were a little bit of a surprise," Lorek said. "It's not something that you expect every year, so it's not really a goal. Our

goal would definitely be to move up in the conference meets and qualify as many people as we can for the national meet."

Lorek recruited 15 athletes for both his men's and women's teams for this season.

"We have a good blend of returners and new people," Lorek said. "With freshmen, they're kind of an unknown quantity. I think we're going to be a good, well-rounded team and very competitive in our league."

He expects a couple of the incoming freshmen to have a big impact on this season and help this team.

"On our men's side, freshman Travis Manning is going to come out of the football program," Lorek said. "He was double recruited for us along with Kohlman Adema-Schulte. I definitely think those guys are going to be impact



file photo

JUNIOR RYAN DARLING (left) and sophomore Isaac Freeman (right) run at the Jock's Nitch Northwest Open on April 4.

guys for us as freshmen. On our women's side, I think we have a very solid thrower in Laquisha McKnight. I think Jessica Hugo is going to be a real good one for us in the hurdles. Then we have another girl, Mikayla Chambers, who's a very talented 400-runner."

The athletes have time to develop and prepare before the meet in Ames, Iowa.

"I think it wouldn't be too much to expect to get a couple of provisional qualifiers in that meet," Lorek said. "Then we hit that long, dreaded Christmas break."

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